

Shackled City Volume Two



A Campaign Log of The Shackled City Adventure Path



Campaign Began: October 29th, 2009

Final Session Was: TBD

DUNGEON MASTER: Hank Woon

[Pathfinder Wiki](#)

[Wikipedia](#)

PREVIOUS SYNOPSSES AVAILABLE

[SHACKLED CITY VOLUME ONE](#)

CHAPTERS

- **CHAPTER 6:** Test of the Smoking Eye by David Noonan *Sessions: 24-25 Average Party Level by Completion: 11th*
- **CHAPTER 6.5:** The Siege of Redgorge by Hank Woon *Sessions: 25-26 Average Party Level by Completion: 12th*
- **CHAPTER 7:** Secrets of the Soul Pillars by Jesse Decker *Sessions: 26-27 Average Party Level by Completion: 13th*
- **CHAPTER 8:** The Lords of Oblivion by Christopher Perkins *Sessions: 28-29 Average Party Level by Completion: 15th*
- **CHAPTER 9:** Foundations of Flame by Chris Thomasson (aka Chris Sims) *Sessions: 30*
- **CHAPTER 10:** Continued in [VOLUME THREE](#)



RECAP

In Volume One, the pirate Dallen Yadwrick fled Sasserine after narrowly escaping execution and arrived at the city of Cauldron. He soon discovered that, while the peninsula offers many entrepreneurial prospects, the volcano-city is bound by many dark secrets, and something evil brews with the jungle-shrouded region.

As fate drew Dallen deeper into the sinister web surrounding the nobles of the city, he discovered his latent magical powers—powers tied to darkness and shadow. He learned this was due to his parentage, for he is the scion of the Demon Lord Adimarchus, the Lord of Madness. Now Dallen and his fellow companions of his adventuring company—THE CHULTAN EXPLORATION SOCIETY—find themselves trapped in the Calimshan Desert, far from Cauldron—far from anything...

...with an offer from a mysterious demon. A demon who works for the Cagewrights, the vile secret society who have been behind all of Cauldron's recent woes, and who worship Adimarchus and wish to free him from his prison in Carceri.

If they go with this creature, known as Kaurophon, to Occipitus—the layer of the Abyss ruled by Adimarchus—and help him gain the vacant throne, he will return them to the Chultan Peninsula and help them defeat the Cagewrights.

Dallen and his companions agreed to go with him... What will they find there? Will Dallen discover more about his past, and thus his ultimate destiny...?

CHAPTER SIX: TEST OF THE SMOKING EYE



Server started.

Dallen Yadwrick has connected.

Dunjun has connected.

Our heroes agreed to travel with Kaurophon to the Abyssal layer of Occipitus to take the Test of the Smoking Eye. In return, the creepy little demon promises to take them back to the Material Plane and defeat the Cagewrights and reveal their plans...

AND THEN THERE WERE TWO... AGAIN

About a year passed between the last session and this one, and in that time Tim/Augustus, Emerson/Orenillius, and Mike/Clescet had to drop out.

DUNGEON MASTER

Occipitus resembles an endless land of rolling hills and forests. A blood-red sky above it all. But upon closer inspection, you realize that the ground resembles human flesh. Pores the size of dinner plates. The stench of sour sweat heavy in the air. Damp with it. The forests resemble gigantic pubic hair. Sprouting up out of the flesh. The hills resemble giant boils. The sky filled with floating blobs of plasma. They look like those giant bubbles kids make at the park, only red and orange. Some are as small as dogs. Others as large as elephants. They seem to be ascending from the center of this disgusting plane. Rising from something and scattering throughout the air. Kaurophon warns you not to touch them.

DUNJUN

I've got a bad feeling about this...



KAUROPHON

The Cathedral of Feathers was part of Celestia. Now, like the rest of Adimarchus's fallen realm, it is damned. Here we will find the administrator of the Test of the Smoking Eye. He will tell us the path we must follow to reclaim this ruined realm. Shall we proceed?



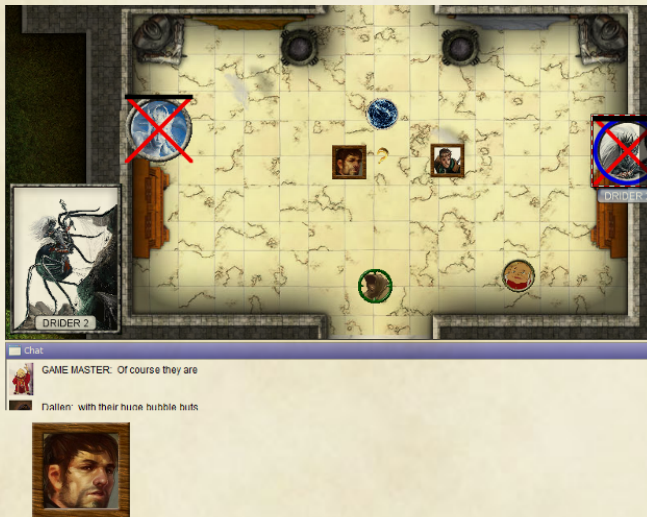
They enter...



DUNGEON MASTER

Two driders drop from the shadowy ceiling!

Though they are ambushed, the party manages to easily take out the two cursed drow...



DUNJUN

Never took a liking to spiders. they are an abomination against all creation...Those things...were worse.



DALLEN

Some say spiders were created by a mad wizard...

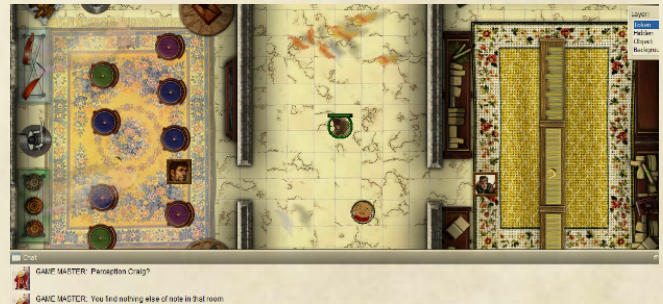
DUNJUN

I believe it.

The group didn't make it far before being ambushed by more monsters...



After overcoming these foes, they continue searching the Cathedral of Feathers...



Finally coming to a statue, under which Dallen discovered a hidden staircase descending beneath the cathedral...



They follow it down...



DALLEN

Hello.

MUMMY LORD

Welcome, son of Adimarchus. Do you come to take the Test of the Smoking Eye?

KAUROPHON

We do!

DALLEN

Do not speak for me ever. Or it will be the last words you utter, do you understand?

KAUROPHON

Grrr... As you say.

DALLEN

Do I just need to sign some stuff and then we are good?

MUMMY LORD

You must travel to the Skull Mountain. Across the Plain of Cysts... But to cross the Plain of Cysts, you need the Lamp of Enlightenment. The Lamp of Enlightenment resides in a room at the other end of this underground complex. There are two paths to the Lamp of Enlightenment. The room to the north... And the room to the south... Whichever room you choose, you must slay its occupant. To the north is a powerful demon. Strong and thirsting for mortal flesh. To the south, an angel, bound and helpless – our prisoner since the war.

DALLEN

When was the war?

MUMMY LORD

Thousands of years ago. When this layer of the Abyss was created. Sundered during your father's rebellion against the wretched heavens.

Dallen wastes no time—rushes to the south door...



MUMMY LORD: Thousands of years ago.
MUMMY LORD: When this layer of the Abyss was created.
MUMMY LORD: Sundered during your father's rebellion against the wretched heavens.

KAUROPHON

Yes, yes, excellent choice! This will be much easier!

DALLEN

Hello, there.

HALALIA, AVORAL GUARDIAN ANGEL

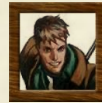
So, this is how it ends.

DUNJUN

You can't be serious. We can't do this.

KAUROPHON

Silence, creature!



DALLEN

Is it? Has a thousand years of imprisonment quelled your divine spirit.

HALALIA, AVORAL GUARDIAN ANGEL

My eternal spirit shall never diminish. Do to me what you shall and be done with it.

DUNJUN

This isn't right. It can't be.

KAUROPHON

Coward. Silence your tongue if you have not the stomach for it!

DUNJUN

How about I silence yours!

DALLEN

How is it bound?

DUNGEON MASTER

Chains.

DALLEN

Can I enter the circle?

DUNGEON MASTER

Yes.

DALLEN

Hm... (Dallen draws his sword with grim determination on his face)

KAUROPHON

Do it! What are you waiting for!

DALLEN

Strike the chains in attempt to break them.

DUNGEON MASTER

They shatter!



KAUROPHON

Fool!

HALALIA, AVORAL GUARDIAN ANGEL

I thank you!

DUNGEON MASTER

YOU BOTH ARE FULLY HEALED, GAIN 1 FATE POINT, and ARE BLESSED FOR 3 hours. (The angel vanishes.)

KAUROPHON

Fools. There is still another way. We must now face the demon.

Dallen looks at the test administrator mummy lord on their way to the northern passage...

DALLEN

I freed the angel.

MUMMY LORD

As you wish, my lord. But if you hope to pass the test, you must have the Lantern of Enlightenment. Only way remains now is through the north passage.

DALLEN

You can not seriously expect the lamp of enlightenment to be reached by destroying angels.

MUMMY LORD

It is the test your father created. His dual nature at war with itself. For eternity. This drives his madness. And his power.

DALLEN

To rebel is one thing.... to embrace that fall afterwards was his folly.

MUMMY LORD

As you say, my lord.



The powerful arcane combinations of Dallen and Dunjun reduce the demon's tactical options to nil, and they quickly overpower and slay the foul creature before heading deeper into the dungeon...



They get to the chamber of the lantern on the other side...



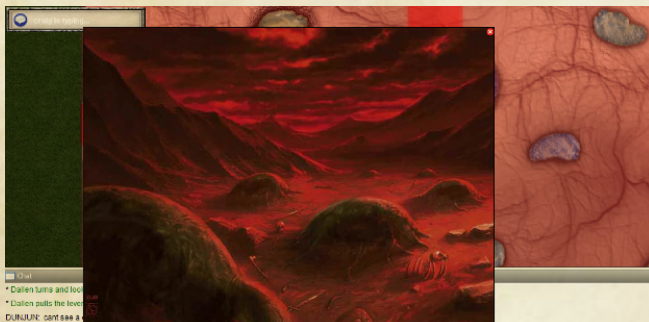
KAUROPHON

Take it, and pull the lever.

DALLEN

(Dallen takes the lamp in hand... Dallen turns and looks at his sordid companions... Dallen pulls the lever...)

They are all instantly transported to the Plain of Cysts...



DUNGEON MASTER

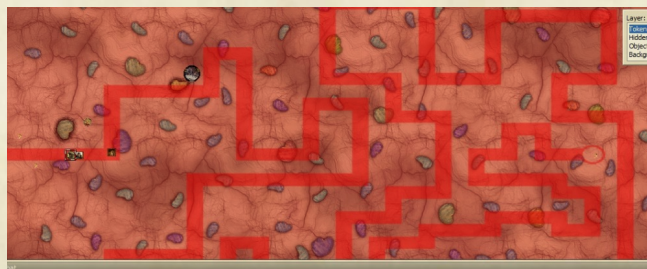
The red path is the light shooting out from the lantern.

KAUROPHON

We must never step off the path, and we must continuously move forward.

They go in turns. After making their movements, they must roll a d20. They soon learn that if one of them rolls a 20, everyone else suffers 10d6 damage from a geyser of boiling pus erupting from beneath them!

While natural 20s don't come up too often, each of them has to roll each turn—and it's a long, long path to the end...



GAME MASTER: I mean roll 1d20
grolls: d20→5
m has received initiative.

Eventually the party comes across an abyssal basilisk. Ever cautious, Dallen hesitates—moving only slightly during his turn...



And because he did...



DUNJUN

Did we just get thrown back?

DUNGEON MASTER

Yup.

After learning this rule, Dallen uses expeditious retreat to run 240 feet per turn!



DUNJUN

Can we leap to another part of the path?

DUNGEON MASTER

Try it.

DUNJUN

F-@! you.

DUNGEON MASTER

lol

DALLEN

I believe jumping off the path is leaving the path.

They wisely decide against it. Dallen even ignores a huge pile of treasure...



TALES OF THE MULTIVERSE

When I ran this little part of the trial the first time, back in '05, I had I think 5 players, so a natural 20 came up a lot more often. They got thrown back twice before figuring out the rule, then the third time trying to get through, one of them got knocked out, making his character unable to keep going—so they were thrown back again!

That was a lot more memorable than this time. With only two players, the conceit of this little moment is rather anticlimactic.

But eventually they reach the end, and are instantly transported...



DALLEN

Oh, back to the pubic hair forest. I feel like we are on a cancerous bugbear.

DUNJUN

Honey, I shrunk the adventurers.

KAUROPHON

Now we just need to make it through the fibrous forest to the skull.

They don't make it very far before running into an old friend...



DALLEN

Didn't we fight Dhorlot before?

DHORLOT, THE DRAGON FATHER

Yes, you slew me! Now I can have my revenge

DALLEN

So, hell was your reward for the life you lived, and to dwell with revenge in your heart for this whole time. Such a waste..... a creature as magnificent as a dragon so foul and short sighted.

DHORLOT, THE DRAGON FATHER

A fate better than the one I have in store for you!

*They manage to slay Dhorlot (again), but Dallen's necklace of fireballs **also** takes out Kaurophon!*

DHORLOT, THE DRAGON FATHER

MY CHILDREN WILL AVENGE ME!

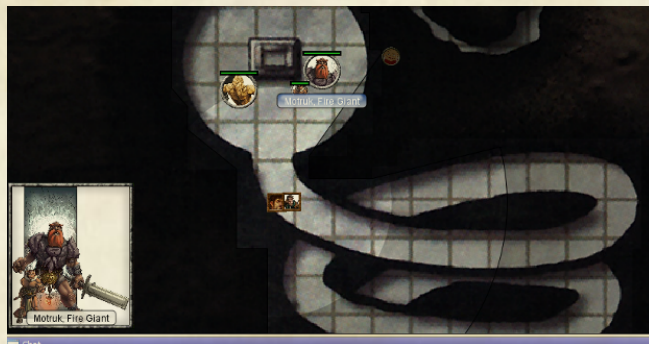
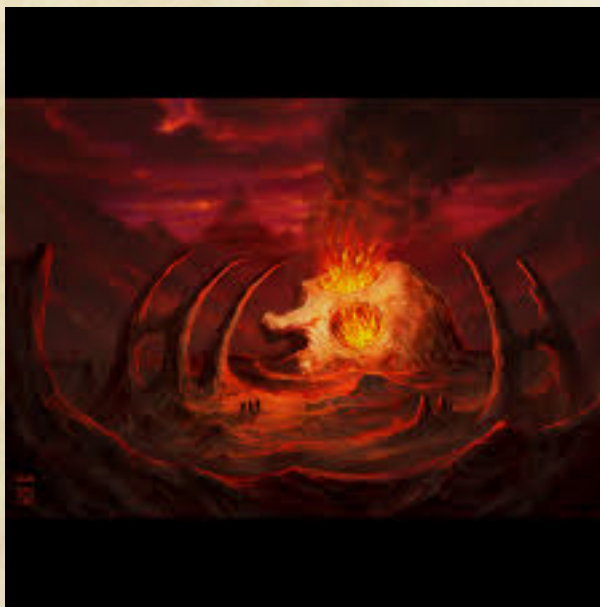
DUNJUN

Your children shall rot in the Abyss with you!!!

DALLEN

Great, more dragons.

They move on, Dallen dragging Kaurophon's burned corpse, eventually reaching the Skull Mountain...

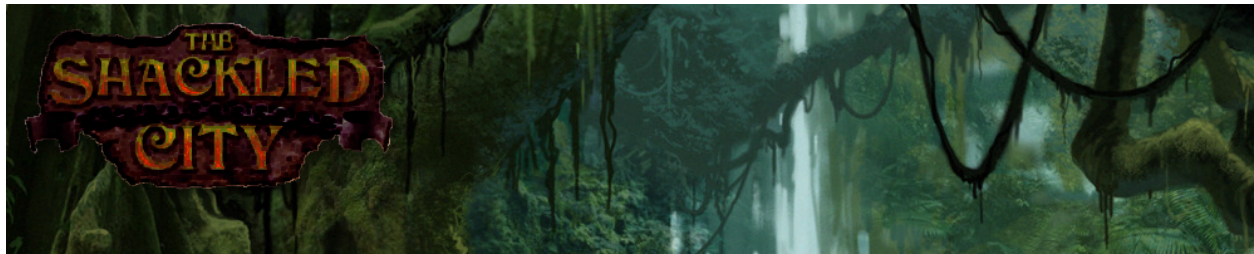


DUNGEON MASTER

You enter its mouth and find a ramp leading upward...

And that's where we left off... until next time!





INTERMISSION

The following was submitted by Justin, regarding his thoughts on the areas surrounding Cauldron, and what it would most likely be like...

“Cauldron would be surrounded by rice paddies terraced down the hill sides. Winding roads would twist and turn through the mountains. Any area that was relatively flat would be used for grazing zebu cattle. It would be nearly impossible to pack slaughtered animals to market in the hot, humid climate and without a seasonal temperature difference it would be driven by the rainy season. Animals would be herded along the winding mountain roads prior to the rainy season for slaughter and preparation [NOTE FROM HANK: This would likely mean drovers get paid handsomely in this region]. There would be plenty of fruits and spices in the cuisine. I imagine it would be something similar to Mexican food, which is basically adapted european cuisine to a tropical climate.



“All of this infrastructure would be there to maintain civilizations of foreign interests. Greyhawk, Sasserine, Cauldron and other “European” settlements would have been built up to support mining operations throughout the peninsula. Which means other than malachite, the main spine of mountains running north to south would be filled with precious stones and gold. Greyhawk would have to be in a large, relatively flat, valley, supporting cattle herds and massive millet and rice paddies, with many rooftop fruit and vegetable gardens to supplement the diet of rice and cheese and small portions of bird, fish and cattle you could afford by station.

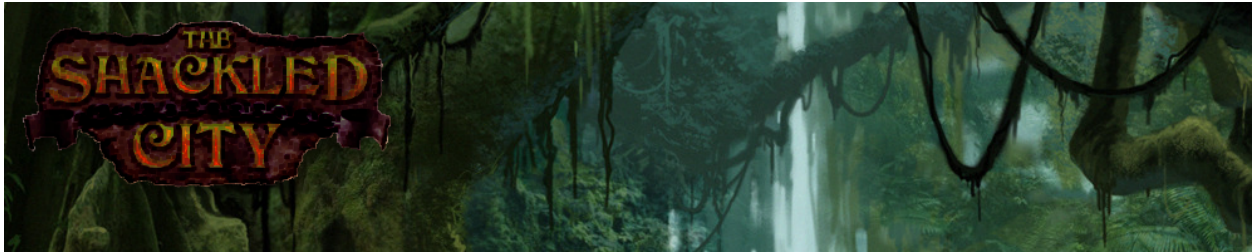
“Another thing we can learn by observing the map is that Greyhawk is remotely located in the northern interior with other well-established settlements leading south toward the bustling port of Sasserine on the southern coast. A few small forts dot the northern coast, but these are nothing more than mercenary camps and pirate coves. So that would lead us to believe that the mountains are steep and nearly impassable the farther north you go. With Greyhawk being probably the last arable plateau in the North. Roads have been etched in the less-massive hills and mountains in the south, eventually leading to gentle rolling jungle hills in the south. I also imagine much of the coast is rocky and treacherous to navigate based on the nature of a region of mountains jutting up from the sea. Yet in the North there are still a handful of keeps, castles, and towers so the waters are not entirely impassable on the north coast, just the interior is probably dotted with cliffs, steep hills, and twisting valleys.



“With Calimshan being Chult’s closest developed neighbor, and that nation having developed an adversarial nature with its northern neighbors beyond Amn, I’d imagine that surplus rice, cattle, and timber from Chult would be sold in markets across Calimshan. Especially with Calimshan boasting such a large navy. It probably drives Calimshite authority nuts that they



have yet to bring Chult directly under its control. Although it does have tons of investment and probably the vast majority of the immigrated population is Calimshite or straight from Al Qadim far to the south east, with most of the rest of the population made up of more “European” settlers from the frozen north, down throughout the Sword Coast. With the instability of the Border Kingdoms and the vast, uncontrolled plains east of there I don’t imagine there has been much immigration from the east. Probably trade routes across the Lake of Steam and on north into the Inner Sea.



"I also imagine that every decent-sized city mints its own coins. That being Sasserine and Greyhawk. With both cities reminting other nations' coins with a few slices shaved off. Greyhawk being a remote state would probably be the worse offender and Sasserine would probably have a lower exchange rate for Greyhawk coins. Guilds would drive this practice with a certain amount of kickback for controlling the flow of foreign currency. The guilds themselves and "nobility" probable trade in weighted bars and use users and money lenders to verify weights and amounts. So basically the system of coin shaving is in place to rip off the little guy: middle-class merchants and traders operating outside the city. Probably are port taxes and trading taxes as well. With all this localized taxing and guild work, I imagine most of the trade routes are choked with highwaymen and bands of robbers with small militias operating around villages. Ironically, the militias probably extort taxes so they can arm themselves from tribes and bandits. It's probably an expensive route to Greyhawk from Sasserine with most large caravans bringing their own mercenary companies or even paying highwaymen to rob and steal from competitors.



"And just like Nevada during the comstock lode days, I'm sure all these towns are filled with brothels, gambling houses, and all manner of places of ill repute. Towns like Cauldron probably dried out their mines through overuse or other accidents and have become more stable and their populations have lowered while miners and opportunists have moved on to other cities and towns further north.

"I've come to the realization that Chult is basically controlled by people like Dallen. Independent, strong-willed individuals that are trying to establish their own thing. With agencies like the Rhundeen attempting to exert control. There is probably also enclaves in the two major cities run by representatives of their respective nations, like Chinatowns of Calimshite, Al-Qadim, and possibly other nations with large represented populations, fighting to control policy and government. If the two cities could be aligned they could probably establish a decent regional government. But it would be a challenge to bring order to a very chaotic and segmented region."

Server started.

Dallen has connected.

Dunjun has connected.

Scarlet has connected.

Adran has connected.

Shreb-Gnar has connected.



DUNGEON MASTER

"The tube's upward spiral ends in a round chamber with a doorway in the opposite end leading to a spiral staircase. Furniture in this room is limited to a massive iron throne festooned with spikes. Most of the back of the throne is missing, although the framework of the back remains. Before the throne lies a pile of wood-furniture debris from the looks of it. There are ceramic shards on the floor; it looks as if someone smashed a dozen clay pots in here."



NEW SYSTEM & NEW PLAYERS!

It was here we switched from *Pathfinder 1st Edition* to *Dungeons & Dragons 5th Edition*. We also each brought our kids (all in the 12-14 age range): Craig's kid Jayden, who made Shreb-Gnar, the dragonborn ranger (with a pet owlbear); Justin's kid Kael, who made Adran, the drow fighter; and my daughter Yuzu, who made Scarlet, the human sorceress (with a pet pseudodragon & a pet campestri).

CLAY GOLEM has received initiative.

DUNGEON MASTER

The clay golem swings two mighty fists at your face!

Dungeon Master rolls: $d20+8 \Rightarrow 9 + 8 = 17$

Dungeon Master rolls: $d20+8 \Rightarrow 17 + 8 = 25$

Against Dunjun's AC of 27, it's just no use!

DUNGEON MASTER

The fire giant attacks with its greatsword! One slash at Oingo, and one at ShrebGnar!

Dungeon Master rolls: $d20+11 \Rightarrow 9 + 11 = 20$

DUNGEON MASTER

What's your owlbear's AC?

SHREBGNAR

13.

Dungeon Master rolls: $6d6+7 \Rightarrow 21 + 7 = 28$

DUNGEON MASTER

28 damage to Oingo!

Dungeon Master rolls: $d20+11 \Rightarrow 19 + 11 = 30$

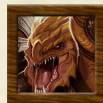
Dungeon Master rolls: $6d6+11 \Rightarrow 22 + 11 = 33$

DUNGEON MASTER

And 33 damage to ShrebGnar!



Chat
DUNJUN: but i dont think so



SHREBGNAR

I cast *hunter's mark* on the fire giant.

ShrebGnar rolls: $d20+7 \Rightarrow 8 + 7 = 15$

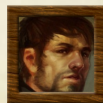
DUNGEON MASTER

Miss!

ShrebGnar rolls: $d20+7 \Rightarrow 14 + 7 = 21$

DUNGEON MASTER

Hit!



DUNJUN

Nice.

ShrebGnar rolls: $1d8+7+6 \Rightarrow 8+7+6=21$

DUNGEON MASTER

Wow.

SHREBGNAR

Monsters can be made to fear.

The battle rages on, with Scarlet dropping the first foe—the fire giant with her ICE STORM spell! But the rakshasa DOMINATED ShrebGnar, forcing him to attack his own owlbear!

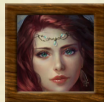


Chat

ShrebGnar has received initiative.



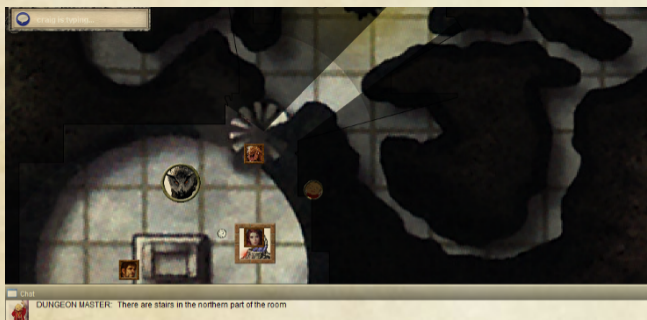
DUNGEON MASTER: Jayden, attack your owlbear!



SCARLET

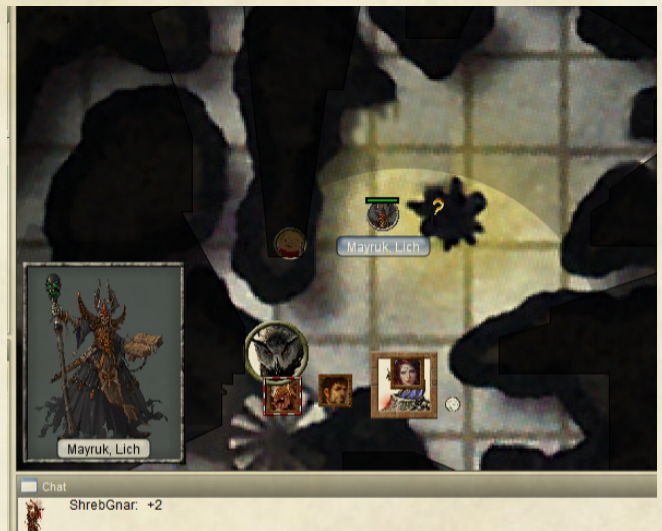
You're so mean!

But the group somehow managed to avoid a TPK, and explored further into the dungeon...



Chat

DUNGEON MASTER: There are stairs in the northern part of the room.



MAYRUK, LICH

You faced me before, in the Tomb of Acererak, but you failed to destroy me or my master's phylacteries! You will pay for your foolish mistake!

DUNJUN

It was on purpose! We live for this stuff!



DUNGEON MASTER

Roll for initiative!

Mayruk talked a big game, but all the PCs rolled a higher initiative, and they completely destroyed him!

DUNGEON MASTER

YOU GUYS DESTROYED HIM IN ONE ROUND HE DIDN'T EVEN GET TO GO.

DUNJUN

Booyakasha!!!

DUNGEON MASTER

Dunjun, you see the phylactery around its neck.....

DUNJUN

Hmmmm, well lookie here, ladies and gentlemen.

SHREBGNAR

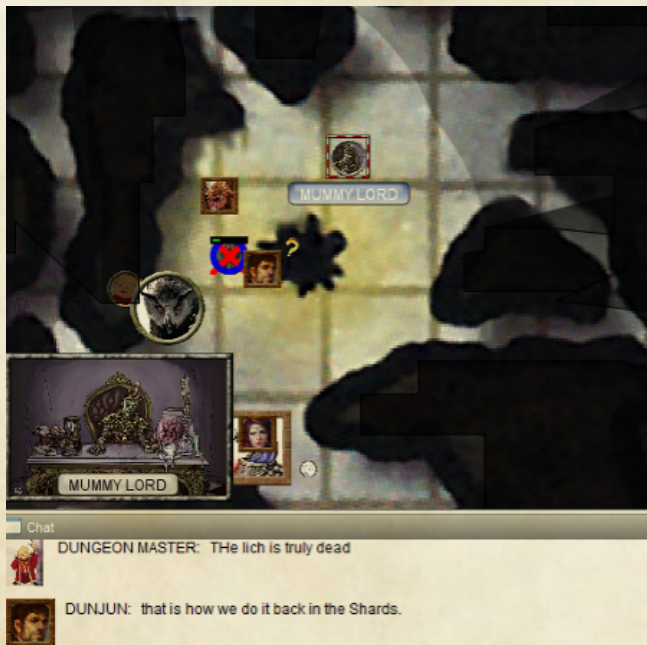
What a glorious hunt.

DUNJUN

I crush it in the maw of the Steamo.

DUNGEON MASTER

THE PHYLACTERY IS DESTROYED. The Mummy Lord appears.



DUNJUN

We passed your test. *tosses pieces of the phylactery in the dirt at his feet*

The Mummy Lord congratulates them on passing the Test of the Smoking Eye, and once he does, Dallen's RIGHT EYE turns into a snapping ball of FIRE!

Dallen becomes the HEIR TO OCCIPITUS. If he dies and is not resurrected, then his body and all of his possessions reform 1d6 later on Occipitus, and from there he can create a portal to anywhere on the Prime Material Plane. He can also begin to change the features of the Abyssal plane to suit his own image, changing 1 mile of terrain for every 1 week spent there. However, until Adimarchus is truly overthrown, then

once he leaves, it reverts back in the same amount of time.

After the battle, the heroes teleport straight to Redgorge...

CHAPTER 6.5: THE SIEGE OF REDGORGE



The group arrives at Redgorge...



FARIO

Thank the gods you have arrived!

DUNJUN

We came as soon as we heard. What is the current setup?? Doesn't look good...

DUNGEON MASTER

You of course have been to Redgorge before, but I'll iterate the description here.

Redgorge is a hilltop town surrounded by river valleys with strong defensive features. Over the past several weeks, the garrison of Redgorge has been spread out thin chasing down orc raids in the surrounding jungle, which have been becoming increasingly organized under the leadership of the fire giant Skaithen—the fire giant who defeated you at the Siege of Alderweg.

Under the leadership of Captain Terseon, the ½-orc mercenaries of the Blue Duke assaulted Redgorge in the middle of the night, quickly overwhelming the skeleton force of defenders.

However, Drace Arlica managed to rally the townspeople and inflict many casualties in a counter-attack, but was ultimately defeated and captured. He, his new bride, and the town's mayor, were all then crucified—you can see them on the hilltop. They are all still alive... for now.

DUNGEON MASTER

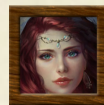
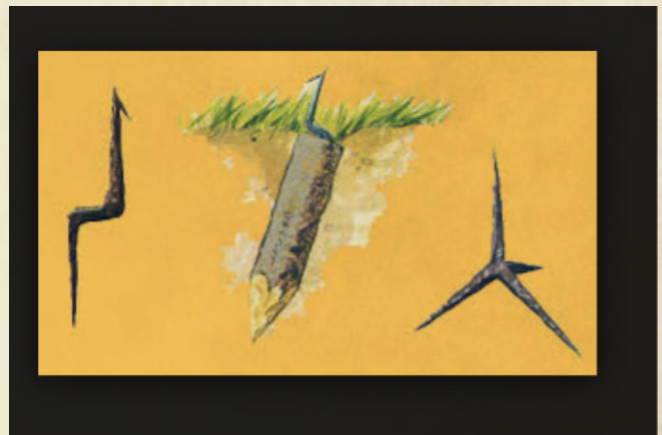
Many townsfolk were killed in this attack (and many half-orc mercenary tokens were destroyed) but many more fled into the night. However, Maavu had rallied all of the Striders—the secret organization he belongs to, along with Fario, Fellian, and Shensen—to come to the town's aid, and when the sun rose on their sprawling encampment at the bottom of the hill, Terseon saw he and the mercenaries were completely surrounded.

Maavu decided upon a siege rather than risking more casualties in a direct assault. The striders set to work constructing a circumvallation around the hill, completely blocking in Terseon and his army. Nearly 20 miles of 12-foot-high fortifications were constructed in about three weeks.

This line was followed inwards by 8-foot-wide ditches, also 13 feet deep. The one nearest to the fortification was filled with water from the surrounding rivers. These fortifications are supplemented with mantraps and deep holes in front of the ditches, and regularly spaced watch towers equipped with artillery.

However, one week ago, scouts reported that the orcs of the jungles had mobilized and were moving in to attack, led by the fire giant Skaithen. Maavu then ordered the construction of a second line of fortifications, a contravallation, facing outward and encircling his army between it and the first set of walls.

The second line is identical to the first in design and extends for nearly 25 miles, including four camps. This set of fortifications will protect the Strider army when the relief orc forces arrived: they will still be besiegers, while also preparing to themselves be besieged.



SCARLET

Oh my god! They got me sucked into this?? It's like a poisonous sandwich, with the good guys in the middle!

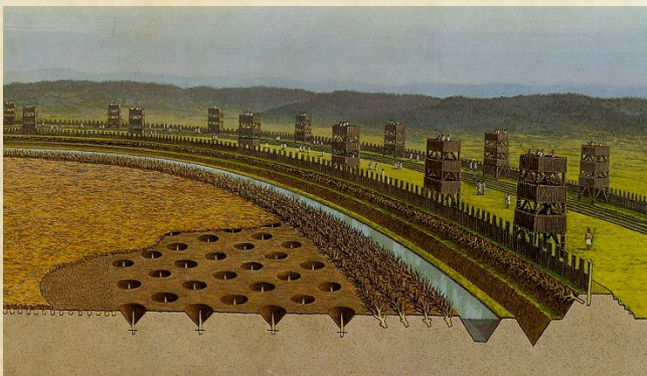
SHREBGNAR

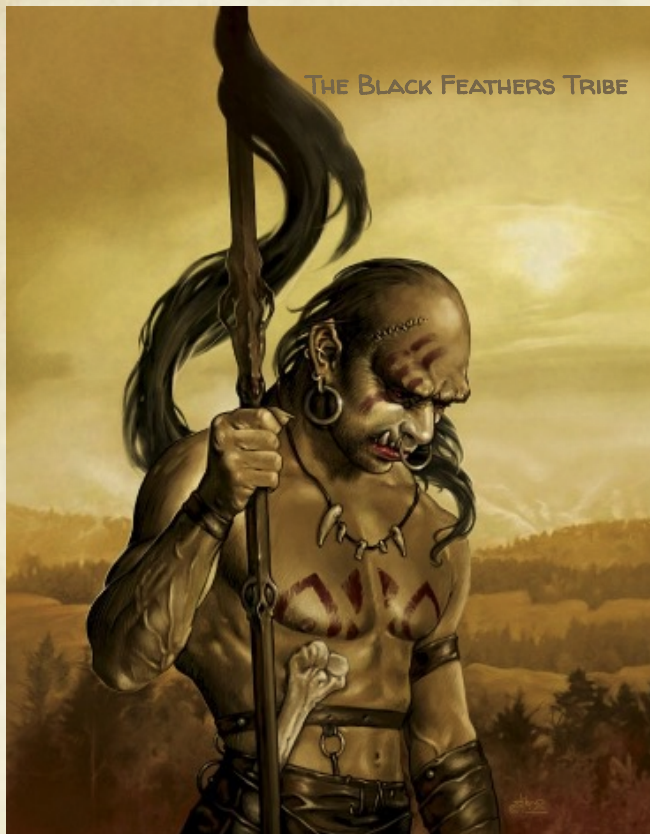
PB & Orc!

DUNJUN

lol

Skaithen had rallied all of the most powerful orc tribes of Chult, including...





THE BLACK FEATHERS TRIBE



THE SAVAGE SWORDS TRIBE



THE LONG SPEARS TRIBE



Dual wielding

THE BLACK HEARTS TRIBE

THE DWARF SLAYERS TRIBE



THE FORBIDDEN SKULLS TRIBE



THE IRON FIST TRIBE



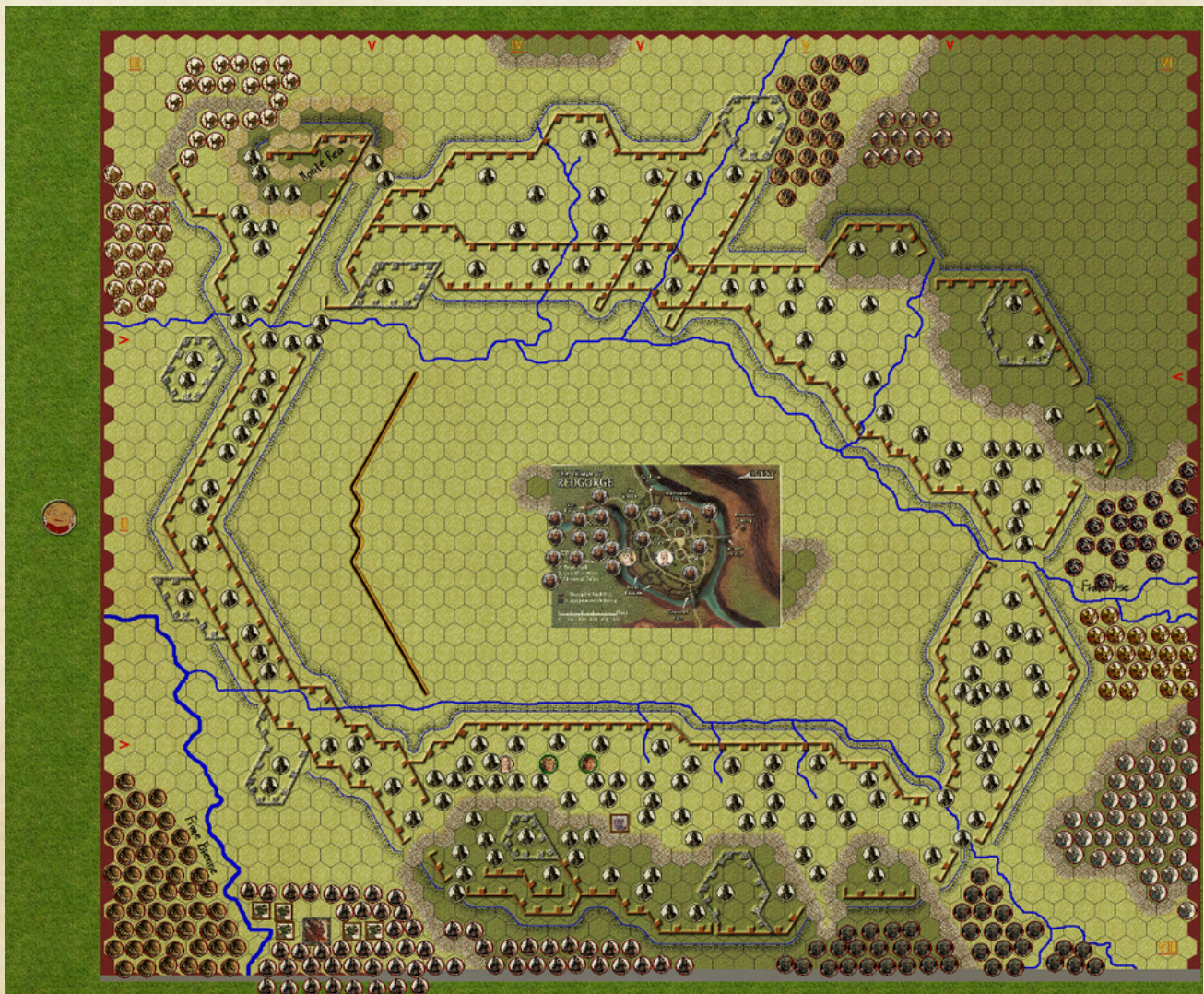
THE SHADOW HOWLERS TRIBE



THE SWAMPWALKERS TRIBE



THE WEEPING DEAD TRIBE



They are led by Skaithen...



Veni, Vidi, Vici

History buffs might recognize I modeled this battle after the historic [SIEGE OF ALESIA](#), during Julius Caesar's Gallic Campaigns.

*With Skaithen were the remaining hobgoblins from the Siege of Alderweg, some 50 strong, an elite army now known as **ALDERWEG'S RAIDERS**...*



DUNGEON MASTER

Okay, so here are the rules for the siege...

The siege of Redgorge is divided into four quadrants: North, South, East, West.
Each Quadrant has an attacker (orcs) and defender (humans).

MASS COMBAT

When I first started playing D&D in 1990, I was a huge, huge, HUGE fan of the BATTLESYSTEM rules. In fact, I still am. It's what led me to develop my own rules for mass combat, for the Pathfinder system (though they work with very little tinkering for any iteration of D20 or D&D), which were published in 2008: [WARPATH](#).

*The group withheld the **FIRST DAY** of the siege, holding off the orcs and destroying between 200-300 of them while suffering no casualties themselves!*

*We left off there and will pick it back up next session on the **Siege Day Two**.*

UNTIL NEXT TIME!

Server started.

Dallen has connected.

Dunjun has connected.

Scarlet has connected.

Shreb-Gnar has connected.

Adran has connected.

*The **Siege of Redgorge** lasted another 6 days. It began with the heroes sending Fario to the northwest corner of the map, Maavu to the southwest corner, and keeping the rest in the southern quadrant.*

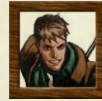
Early on, they had much success in the south, where a majority of their leadership was located. But on the second day of the siege, Terseon Skellerang led a sally from Redgorge, attacking the lightly defended northern quadrant...



By day 3, they had taken it completely.



*But while Terseon and the half-orc mercenaries overwhelmed the northern quadrant, the heroes broke the southern quadrant, wiping out **ALDERWEG'S RAIDERS** to a man. Well, to a hobgoblin. Skaithen was forced to retreat to the west and regroup.*



DALLEN

Skaithen is escaping to the west. But the other quadrants are being overrun. We can't follow Skaithen, but we can't let him escape again.

Fortunately for them, Skaithen stopped in the west quadrant, taking up command there.

Shensen and Fellian led a group north in a bid to reclaim the defenses there, while Dunjun went to the western quadrant to reinforce against Skaithen's new assault. Dallen, Scarlet, Adran, and ShrebGnar went to the eastern quadrant.



Chat
DUNGEON MASTER: Any other action?
DALLEN: just trying to get north. I can't take any other action with a double move

The eastern quadrant fell on the fifth day, and ShrebGnar and Adran led men north, while Dallen and Scarlet led more men to reinforce the west. Meanwhile, a contingent of 80 soldiers were sent to retake Redgorge.

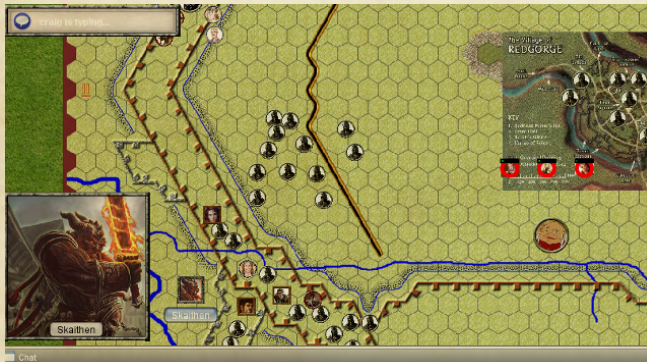


Meanwhile, in the north, the forces under Fario, Fellian, and Shensen were finally wiped out through attrition. The three NPCs held off the forces of Terseon and Skylar until the fifth day, when all three succumbed to their wounds, falling unconscious.

But before Terseon could swing down from the north to outflank the rest of the good guys in the southwest, ShrebGnar and his owlbear Oingo, by themselves and outnumbered cut them off!



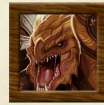
Though Shrebgnar was wounded in the heroic struggle, he managed to whittle their forces down and keep them contained long enough for the forces in the southwest to defeat the rest of the army and bring down the mighty fire giant Skaithen!



Immediately, Terseon, Skylar, and the only remaining orcs (numbering 30) surrendered.

DALLEN

Execute the orcs.



SHREBGNAR

POWs...?

DUNGEON MASTER

There's no stopping the other defenders' bloodlust once Dallen gives the order.

DALLEN

Strip the two lackeys naked and make them walk barefoot through the jungle to Cauldron.

SHREBGNAR

Blind folded and covered in butter.



ADRAN

I have oil of slipperiness.

DUNJUN

All right, gettin' weird.

DUNGEON MASTER

lol

DALLEN

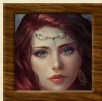
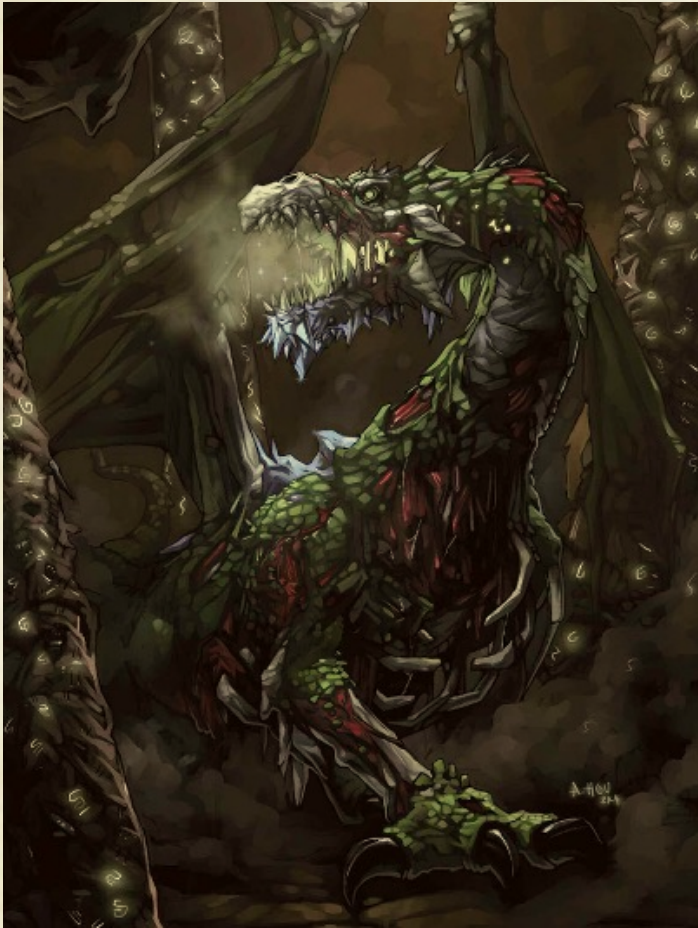
Search Skaithen.

DUNGEON MASTER

You find a letter from the Blue Duke. It instructs the Fire Giant to return to Cauldron with as many orcs as he is able once Redgorge has fallen, and report to Embril, the High Priestess.

After digesting this information, the heroes travel back to Cauldron with their prisoners...

CHAPTER SEVEN: SECRETS OF THE SOUL PILLARS



SCARLET

A town! Finally, I can sell my loot!



But they have other business to attend to first...

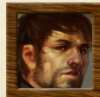
DALLEN

I want to make a public display of their march to the barracks where they will be held prisoner until a military trial can be assembled to convict them of their crimes.



DUNGEON MASTER

Once you get to the barracks, you are horrified to learn that the Blue Duke is now the Dictator of Cauldron and the Lord Mayor is missing.



DUNJUN

Oh, great. Out of the frying pan...

SHREBGNAR

Boy. Dictatorship.

DALLEN

Who has assumed control of the city? Is Maavu with us?

DUNGEON MASTER

Maavu remained behind to help with Redgorge. Most of the other NPCs were too injured to be moved and needed to remain behind to heal. As for Cauldron, the Blue Duke has assumed complete control.

DALLEN

Wasn't that letter from the Blue Duke?

DUNGEON MASTER

Yes. And you get word that Embril is meeting the Blue Duke at the Tipped Tankard Tavern.



DALLEN

How did we discover this info?

DUNGEON MASTER

The soldiers stationed at the barracks. They say that not many half-orc mercenaries are left in town though. Most went to attack Redgorge (and never returned...).

DALLEN

Who are they loyal too? The Blue Duke? Answer me!

DUNGEON MASTER

Whoever pays them. They don't seem to like the Blue Duke, though.

DALLEN

This is what loyalty to the blue duke looks like.

DUNGEON MASTER

Also, the new enforcers of the town are The Stormblades, under the authority of the Blue Duke.

DUNJUN

Those punks.

DALLEN

What will it take to buy the barracks?

DUNGEON MASTER

500 gp per month for 100 men.

DALLEN

Done.

DUNGEON MASTER

They swear loyalty to the dude with burning eye.

DALLEN

I believe we need to see the Blue Duke and Embril.

They head out for the Tipped Tankard...



DALLEN

I don't see anyone...

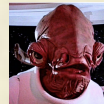
GRATHIS

What can I get ya? Drinks?

DALLEN

No, we are looking for the Blue Duke. Traitor to the lands surrounding Cauldron and Cauldron itself.

BOOM! The door kicks in!

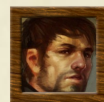


ADMIRAL ACKBAR

It's a trap!!!

ZARIK DHOR

YOU FELL FOR OUR TRAP!



DUNJUN

Nope. You fell into ours!!!

GRATHIS

No blasters! No blasters!

DUNGEON MASTER

ROLL FOR INITIATIVE!

DUNJUN

What are the 3 up front?

DALLEN

Competing for the first to die.

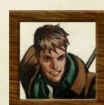
DUNGEON MASTER

lol Humans and a half-orc.

The battle begins. Kennock, the wizard, finally gets to go...

DUNGEON MASTER

Kennock casts *time stop*.



DALLEN

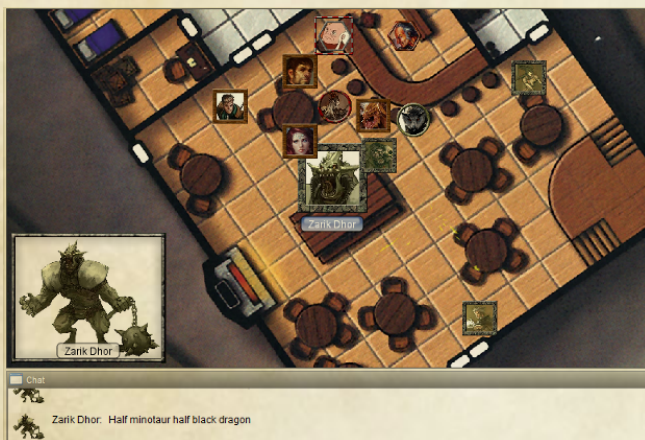
Hold on. Hold it. Just wait a second. I've got counterspell.



Dallen, with the help of a Fate Point, counterspells time stop!

DUNGEON MASTER

Zarik CHARGES FORWARD – tossing the tables and chairs out of his way!



DALLEN

What is that thing?

DUNGEON MASTER

Half minotaur, half black dragon.

ZARIK DHOR

YOU MURDERED MY FATHER, DHORLOT! I WILL HAVE REVENGE!

SHREBGNAR

Daddy issues...



ZARIK DHOR
SON OF DHORLOT

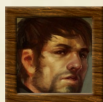
DUNJUN

Iron Bands of Bolero on Zaenna.

Success!



Adrian has received initiative.
Dungeon Master: Kael get



DUNJUN

Completely restrained until I say so.

This is where we left off for the night. Until next time!



Dungeon Master: Do you keep the last one prisoner?

Chat log started

'Dallen' connected

'Dunjun' connected

'Jyu Viole Grace' connected

'Shreb-Gnar' connected

We last left off with our heroes surviving an ambush at the Tipped Tankard Inn, and killing all but one, taking her prisoner...



New VTT!

After using MapTool for 6 years, we switched to [Fantasy Grounds!](#) Also, Justin chose a new token image for Dallen.

It was also around this time when I mentioned to Justin that somewhere along the way, Dallen lost his pirate accent. He replied, "Yeah. His Charisma went up." I found that rather amusing.



ZAENNA

Let me go, swine!



DALLEN

Why would we do that?

ZAENNA

If you knew what's best for you, you'd flee this city and never return! Flee Chult! It can buy you a few years of your pathetic little lives.

DALLEN

Speaking of buying... are you a freelance assassin or some foolish zealot?

ZAENNA

We are free agents, but we have seen the wisdom of The Cagewrights, and have been promised power in their New World Order.

DALLEN

If you drink their poison then you are no longer free agents.

ZAENNA

If you were to join them, you would understand...

DALLEN

Where are the Cagewrights? And if they are so bold and have such far vision of the world why do they hide?

ZAENNA

You are free to ask them yourself! Their leader is the High Priestess Embril. Her church is here in Cauldron. No doubt you know of her already.

DALLEN

Join the Cagewrights?

ZAENNA

It's the only way to save yourselves.

DALLEN

I will use their blood and bodies as the foundation to build something even greater than they have the short sightedness to understand.

ZAENNA

Bold talk for a washed-up pirate! Fine then. Go to your doom.

DALLEN

I welcome their challenge and look forward to stepping over them.



DUNGEON MASTER

Do you go to the church?

DALLEN

Yeah. We should take our prisoner, too.

The heroes drag their prisoner from the Tipped Tankard all the way to the Church of Kelemvor. After they receive no response from their aggressive arrival announcement, they kick the door in, only to discover that a large group was waiting for them...



DALLEN

I have your agent. The murderer and sneak.



CALMUS VEL

Thank you for returning her.

DALLEN

grab her by the hair She will be your vanguard... to the Abyss! *slit her throat*

DUNGEON MASTER

She dies, choking on her own blood, which spreads into a pool on the stone floor!



SCARLET

Uh... Well technically she's a bad guy, so I guess that's okay.

CALMUS VEL



DALLEN

We will never join you. Your vision is narrow and weak. You hide in shadows and orchestrate your ideas against the people.

CALMUS VEL

Fools. You think yourselves powerful and capable. You let the victory at Redgorge fill you with a misbegotten confidence. You helped draw out Maavu and those pitiful protectors of Chult, and now they are but a few left. You are now alone against a vast horde you have no hope of stopping.

DALLEN

We don't stand alone. We stand against you. No one will let you get away with this. Even if we fall the rest of the world will see to stopping you.

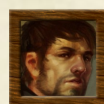
CALMUS VEL

We have already won. Throw down your arms, and submit to the will of Adimarchus.

They don't see eye to eye, and a battle begins!



We had some trouble getting the hang of the new system and there were some... delays... but eventually we got into the flow of things. The group ganged up on one of the stone giants with a grip of spells, ending it pretty quickly, but then the rest swarmed in around Dunjun...



DUNJUN

Earth tremor, centered on myself.

DALLEN

(Dallen looks for shadows.) Where is the priestess?

CALMUS VEL

Surrender now, and I will gladly take you to her!



SHREBGNAR

You know what, guy? No.

CALMUS VEL

You may have killed one of my giants, but look around! It is hopeless!

The fight continues, until finally...

DUNGEON MASTER

Scarlet casts *lightning bolt*! Calmus drops, smoking and sizzled.

They head deeper into the church...



DUNGEON MASTER

That's an altar.

DALLEN

What's it made of?

DUNGEON MASTER

Obsidian. You, Dallen, feel a particularly special... connection... with it.

DALLEN

(Dallen lays his ear upon the cold surface. Looks up at the party.)

DUNGEON MASTER

You have flashing images of Occipitus. You can feel the power of that dark Abyssal realm moving through you. Do you extend that power to the other members of the party?

DALLEN

If I can.

DUNGEON MASTER

All of you feel a sudden surge of power coming from the altar. A calling. Do you accept the gift?



DALLEN

We will need to get this back to the Chultan House for more study.

SHREBGNAR

The gift of...?

DUNGEON MASTER

It's a gift from the Abyss.

With some initial hesitation, the entire party agrees to accept the gift...

DUNGEON MASTER

Okay, all of you gain 1 Fate Point plus a one-time +10 bonus on any roll, including damage. This ability can be used once per moon (month), or whenever you guys sacrifice a living creature (humanoid or monstrous humanoid) on this altar. So once a month, if you return to the altar, you gain this boon.

After deciding they definitely need to keep this altar, they move deeper into the church...



DUNJUN

(Dunjun opens the door.)

DUNGEON MASTER

It's a study. Books about priesthood and the deity Kelemvor are on the walls.

DUNJUN

Search the shelves closer.

DUNGEON MASTER

Roll.

Dunjun rolls: 1d20+1 = 18

DUNGEON MASTER

You find a *scroll of hold person*.

DALLEN

We will need to get the new members over here to bring these books home.

DUNJUN

Agreed.

They move into another room and discover a freshly killed corpse...



DUNGEON MASTER

You find Todd Vandaboren dead. He was one of the Stormblades. He had his heart cut out. Ritually.

DUNJUN

tsk tsk

DALLEN

Is he bound?

DUNJUN

Looks like suicide. Open and shut. Back to the mystery machine!

DUNGEON MASTER

No, but there is evidence that he had been. Bruises around his wrists and ankles.

DALLEN

I hated these fools, but they didn't deserve this.

DUNJUN

No one does. Well, except maybe that steaming pile in the other room.

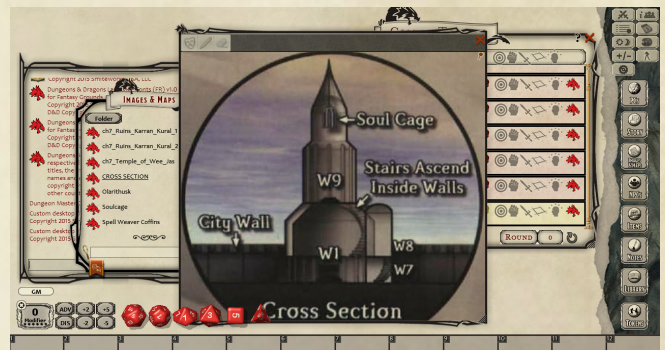
DALLEN

And the priestess.

DUNJUN

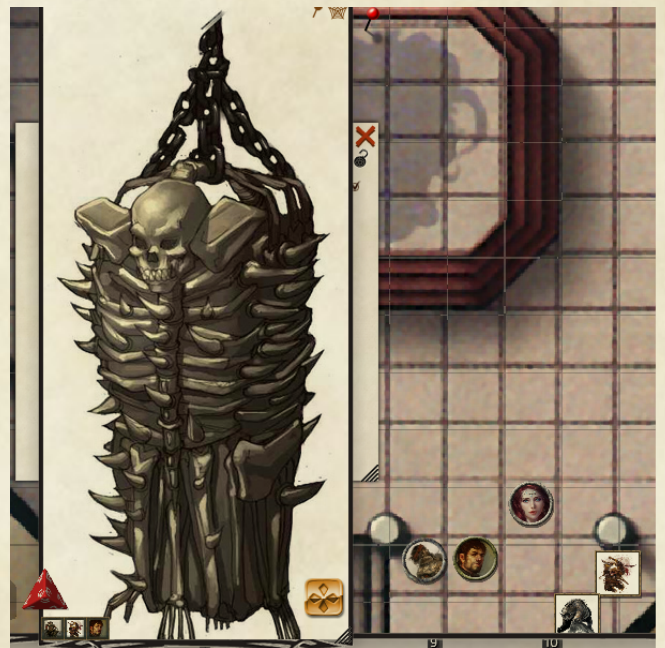
Okay, maybe a lot of people deserve it.

The party continues their search for the High Priestess Embril, eventually reaching the top floor...



DUNGEON MASTER

This is hanging from the ceiling in the center of the room, above the dias:

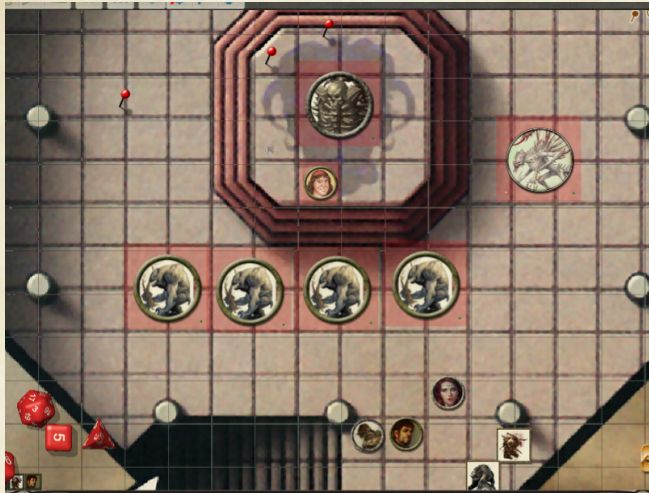


And the room was not empty...



IKE IVERSON

Have you come to surrender?



DALLEN

Where is the priestess?

IKE IVERSON

Embril? She is not here. You may deal with me instead. I believe we have met once before. At the Demonskar Ball. We did not believe then that you would be such a pain. You had your uses, but I'm afraid you've outgrown them.

DALLEN

Oh, so we're an actual threat now?

IKE IVERSON

Not for long.

The battle begins. A handful of rounds in, and Dallen uses his staff of the magi to summon an air elemental...



IKE IVERSON

YOU WILL BURN IN THE UNHOLY FIRES OF ADIMARCHUS, MORTALS!!! (Looks at Dallen.) YOU ARE UNWORTHY OF THAT EYE!!!



DUNJUN

Perhaps we shall take yours!

Dunjun uses the iron bands of Bolero on Ike, restraining him!

DUNJUN

He's Bolero'd up!

DUNGEON MASTER

The air elemental uses its WHIRLWIND ability against Ike!

Dungeon Master rolls: 1d6 = 2

Dungeon Master rolls: 1d6 = 2

Dungeon Master rolls: 1d8 = 3

Dungeon Master rolls: 1d8 = 6

Dungeon Master rolls: 1d8 = 7

DUNGEON MASTER

A ferocious blast of wind sends Ike flying 20 feet, battering him across the floor!

DUNJUN

And he's restrained, so he'll stay there.

The following round, the air elemental rolls to see if it recharges its ability—and it does! Simultaneously, Dallen fires an eldritch blast into Ike...

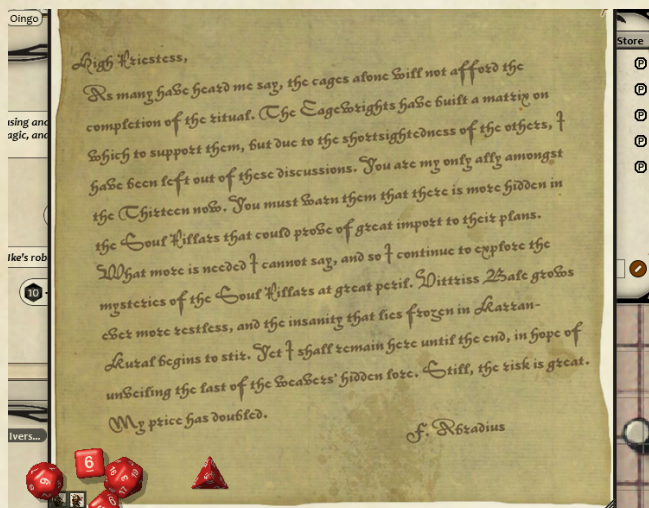
DUNGEON MASTER

Your *eldritch ray* blasts a sizzling hole in Ike's chest as his body tumbles wildly through the chamber. He impales on the hanging SOUL CAGE, dangling from an iron spike. The last thing he sees is Dallen, staring up at him. He dies with a bewildered look on his bloodied, burned, mutilated face.

They finish off the bone devil shortly thereafter, and examine the cage and Ike...

DALLEN

Okay, you realize this cage is using ancient magic. It is associated with portal magic, and the spellweavers. You also find a letter in Ike's robe:



HIGH PRIESTESS,

As many have heard me say, the cages alone will not afford the complication of the ritual. What more is needed I cannot say, and so I continue to study the mysteries of the soul pillars at great peril. The guardian grows ever more restless, and the insanity that lies frozen in Karran-Kural is beginning to stir.

—FETOR

DALLEN

How far are we from the Chultan House?

DALLEN

Can it fit out of the doors?

DUNGEON MASTER

Yes, the soulcage can fit out the doors. And it's a 10-minute walk back to the Chultan House from your current location.

DALLEN

(Dallen lowers his head and smacks his staff onto the ground. Dallen casts *telekinesis*... the soul cage begins to rumble...)

DUNGEON MASTER

The soulcage begins to float!

DALLEN

10-minute duration.

DUNGEON MASTER

Perfect.

DALLEN

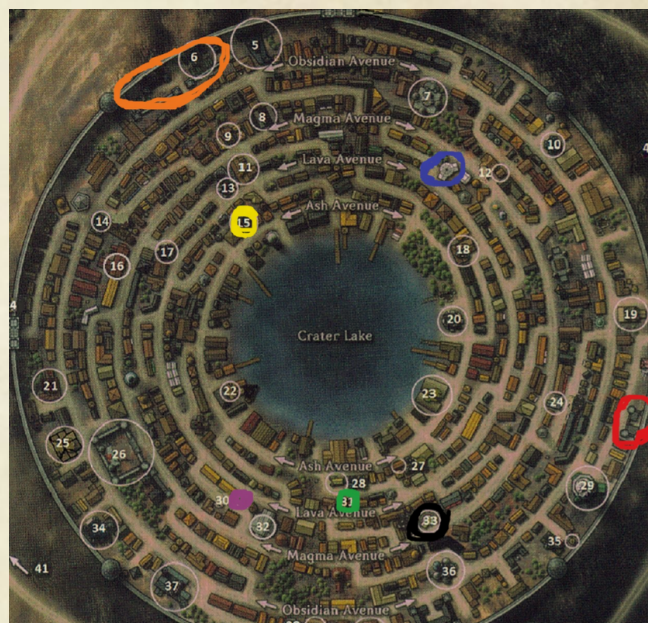
Kelemvor is a LN deity of the dead. His normal followers wouldn't be down with all this cavorting with demons and demonlords. We can send them a detailed account of what is going on thus and that we are trying to get custodial rights to the abandoned church until that time when they can move some of their clergy back to it. This would involve removal of the heretical artifacts and items. The books will be kept at the chultan house under watch until an official clerk of Kelemvor presents themselves. As a sign of good faith we will send the Kelemvor specific-treasure we rescued from the church back to the Greyhawk Parish leaders. Kelemvor also despises the undead. I'll be sure to note that in my report. And obviously we have to find the person who wrote the letter and explore whatever crazy town he's hiding in.



DUNGEON MASTER

And that's where we left off. *Until next time!*

CAULDRON MAP KEY



ORANGE = Town garrison/dungeon

BLUE = Church of Kelemvor

YELLOW = Tipped Tankard Tavern

PURPLE = Keygan Ghelve's Locksmith

GREEN = Orak's Bathhouse

BLACK = Jenya's Church

RED = The Chultan House

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE LORDS OF OBLIVION



Because Dallen decides to go visit The Blue Duke instead of seeking out Karran-Kural, Chapter 7 ended prematurely, and we moved on to Chapter 8 (the consequences of which to be revealed momentarily...).

Dallen and the others return to the home of Lady Thifrane to crash the party. Dallen brings many of his followers, having them fan out and surround the structure in case anyone inside decides to flee. The rest approach the front doors.

As they draw nearer, they hear someone giving a speech. Dallen recognized the voice as The Veiled Lady. They stop to listen:

THE VEILED LADY

Lord Vhalantru apologizes for not being able to attend. He is at his stately manor here in Cauldron preparing for the ritual.

As you know, our hold on Cauldron slips, and Jil's Last Laugh members and what is left of our good Blue Duke's mercenaries are not alone enough for what is to come. While we managed to do away with all opposition, including what we at the time believed to be our greatest threat – Maavu's The Chisel – a new enemy has arisen. Calling themselves the Chultan Exploratory Society, they seized one of our Soul Cages.

Fortunately there was enough material left at the Soul Pillars of Karran-Kural to construct another, and The Cagewrights are nearly completed. Our Lord Adimarchus has over the centuries spawned many bastard offspring. As the generations passed, all obvious traces of their ancestry faded away. Today we recognize this sacred lineage by an invisible birthmark that only we can see.

We call these honored descendants the Shackleborn, and their SACRIFICE is key to opening a portal to Othrys, the first layer of Carceri, where he is imprisoned. In Cauldron, we have found more Shackleborn than anywhere else in Faerun. We have the perfect conditions for the Ritual of Planar Junction. For the past five years, The Cagewrights have labored in secret to build thirteen soulcages to drain the life energies from the Shackleborn.

These soulcages now hang from an ancient and terrible artifact created by the ancient spellweavers, known as the Tree of Shackled Souls-the device that gathers the life energy needed to unlock the prison doors of Carceri. All the preparations are now complete. We now have thirteen Shackleborn that we need in our hands. The last two being the boy Terrem and the dwarf hero Zenith Splintershield.

All that remains now is the ritual itself, which is already underway as we speak. Once it is complete, Cauldron won't be the same quiet little burg it is today. It will be the unholy font from which darkness gushes forth, a roiling pit filled with doom and despair for our enemies.

5 Almost immediately, fiendish armies will sweep across the land and lay waste to surrounding territories, enslaving the weak and carving out new dominions. Naturally, we expect resistance on all sides. We have been working hard to pacify this area for the past several months, but there is still resistance to be found throughout the lands. This is where you all come in. As kings raise armies to confront the Legions of Adimarchus, your slavers, mercenaries, assassins, and spies will undermine their efforts. Let nothing stand in our way as the will of Adimarchus spreads like a dark mantel across all of Faerun!



DUNGEON MASTER

What do you do?

DALLEN

Probably need to burst in there and challenge them while we have them on the ropes.

DUNGEON MASTER

So you kick in the door?

DALLEN

Yes.

And so they do, revealing...



THIFRANE AKA THE VEILED LADY

Speak of Asmodeus, and he shall appear.

There are many familiar faces in this crowd of evil, along with some new ones. In addition to the members of the LAST LAUGH and The Blue Duke's half-orc mercenaries, there are...

The Lady Thifrane, now with a BEHOLDER EYE grafted to her forehead. It is revealed that she is THE VEILED LADY...





THE THREE REMAINING STORMBLADES:
ANNAH TASKERHILL, CORA LATHENMIRE, AND ZACHARY ASLAXIN II.



THE DWARF ADRICK GARTHUN
AND HIS TWO DWARVEN BODYGUARDS DAXAVALT AND KERG.



JIL
LEADER OF THE LAST LAUGH



VAMPIRIC ELF, MHAD



FINCH
JIL'S SECOND IN COMMAND



HATE
THE DREAD WRAITH AND MHAD'S BODYGUARD



KHYRON BLOODSWORN
CLERIC OF ADIMARCHUS



velior thazo
VELIOR THAZO
TIEFLING SORCERER



MELAGORN
HUMAN NECROMANCER



2 BABAU DEMONS

The room of villains turns as one at the intrusion of the adventurers.

LADY THIFRANE

There, my friends, is our enemy!



JIL

Not the enemy of the Last Laugh! We shall not join you in your maddened quest! When we were first hired, we were not told of this. We are rogues, not monsters!

The Last Laugh switches sides!

DALLEN

Well, thank goodness for that.

Just then, five figures appear – an envoy from the Church of Kelemvor in Greyhawk, led by Ahido the High Priest, sent via teleportation spell after they received Dallen's letter!



DALLEN

Thifirane is the veiled lady, which means she is friends with that beholder.

LADY THIFRANE

You should not have come back, pirate!

DUNGEON MASTER

Roll a Con save for Dallen!

Dallen rolls: 1d20 = 4

Dungeon Master rolls: 8d8 = 36



DUNGEON MASTER

A beam of sickish green light erupts from the eyeball on her head and hits you for 36 damage! She then blasts Ahido for 6 dmg with magic missiles!



DUNJUN

I'm going to cast *Aganazzar's scorching wave*. It's going to hit everyone through Daxavalt.

Dunjun delivers devastating damage with his spell, while Scarlet sneaks around to the window in the southern portion of the house and delivers a lightning bolt that nearly kills Thifrane! Meanwhile, one of the Priests of Kelemvor casts a spell that brings the entire front of the home down, allowing them to rush inside instead of having to squeeze through the front door.



ZARKAD

Do you remember me, Dallen? When you left me to rot in that PIT! The Stormblades saved me! I have been waiting for this day!!!



MHAD

You are the ones who cost me my servant, Drakthar! For that you will pay dearly!

DALLEN

It's wall o' fire time. Diaganol across the room. Daxavalt to the Guardian of Faith.

DUNGEON MASTER

My awesome drawing:



The wall of fire kills Thifrane!

DUNGEON MASTER

The Blue Duke casts *CONE OF COLD*!

DALLEN

He can't see me, and he'd have to cast through the *wall of fire*.

DUNGEON MASTER

He can hit Dunjun, though!

Dunjun rolls: $1d20+4 = 19$

DUNGEON MASTER

50 dmg, so you take 25!

DUNJUN

pheww



DALLEN

What happens to the shield guardain now that its spell caster is no more?

DUNGEON MASTER

It just stands there until it's dead.

DALLEN

In a *wall of fire*.

DUNGEON MASTER

Yeah. Just roasting.

The fight rages on, divided into two halves. Their side is quickly won...



DUNJUN

Oh, shit-brb.



ANNA TASKERHILL

We surrender! Our parents are rich! Spare us!

DALLEN

The asshole adventurers who keep stealing our thunder. Lay down your arms and get on the ground and we will accept your surrender.

DUNGEON MASTER

They do as you say. Zarkad as well.

DALLEN

I want some of my followers to escort the Stormblades back, and send some to get the guards to make sure they don't try and overcome my followers and escape.



DALLEN

: Put my hand on Ahido's shoulder, "Thank you, friend."



AHIDO

It is we who owe you a debt of gratitude. Come, let us finish off these fiends.

DALLEN

Dunjun, get into position. I will lower the wall when we are ready to face the last of them. (I imagine the wall in rubble, the wall of fire catching the building on fire, the stormblades being led away in shame, bodies litter the floor. Dalen walks confidently up to the *wall of fire*, and raises his staff...)



DUNGEON MASTER

Do you drop the *wall of fire*?

DALLEN

Yes.

DUNGEON MASTER

It drops. The spellcasters all unleash a volley of magic at The Blue Duke...

DALLEN

I am standing next to the melting figure of the shield guardian, which I imagine is still standing.

DUNGEON MASTER

Yes, still upright like a melting candle.

DALLEN

Mangled on one half from the flame... (To the Blue Duke) Surrender. For your troops.



ZARN KYSS, THE BLUE DUKE

You... you cannot stop them!

DALLEN

We will show mercy. Look around you, do you truly believe that?

ZARN KYSS, THE BLUE DUKE

Let me leave, and I will leave this city and never return. But I must warn you all to flee... We are but their puppets! The Cagewrights will unleash hell upon this planet!

DALLEN

You are a puppet no more.

DUNJUN

Back.

DUNGEON MASTER

He calls off the rest to surrender. "LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS!" They obey.

DUNJUN

Wait, what the hell did I miss??

DALLEN

The party.

ZARN KYSS, THE BLUE DUKE

But it is not over. Even now Lord Vhalantra is in his mansion performing a dark spell.

DALLEN

Well, then we have not time to waste.

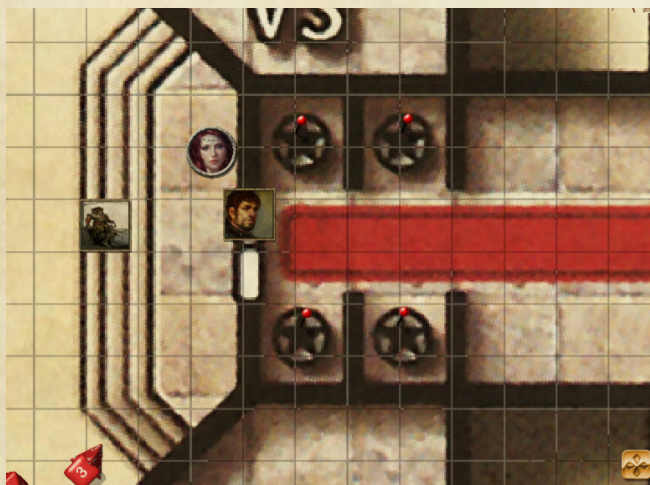
Dallen, Dunjun, and Scarlet head to Lord Vhalantra's home right away.

AND THEN THERE WERE THREE

Kael/Adran and Jayden/ShrebGnar weren't around for the second half of this chapter, but they would return for Chapter 9.

DALLEN

Let's kick the door in, as is our custom.



DUNJUN

Well..it would appear that someone has laid out the red carpet for us.

They quickly discover many well-sculpted statues of what look like various types of adventurers around the mansion...

DUNGEON MASTER

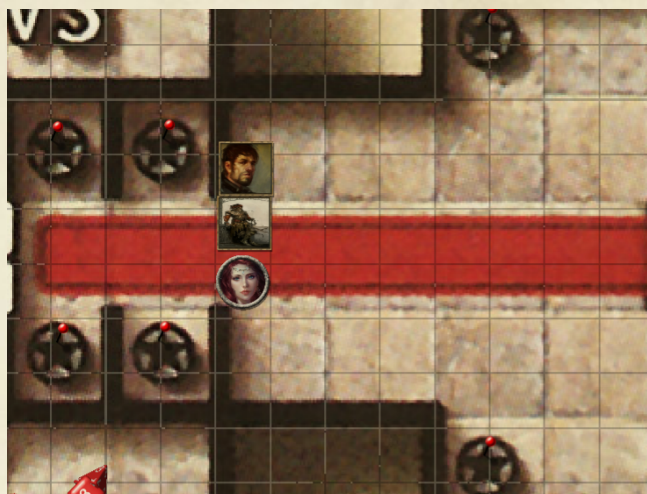
You guys may recall that Vhalantru is a renowned sculptor.

DALLEN

So it's said, but I assume he is some kind of flesh-to-stone monster. Cast *detect magic* on the statues.

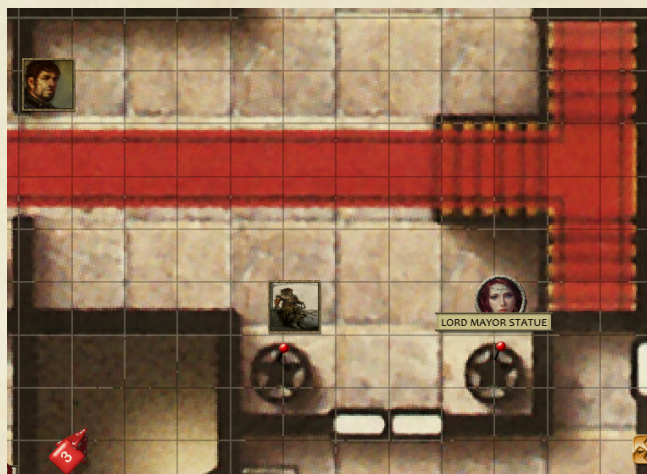
DUNGEON MASTER

Dark magic has been at work here.



DUNGEON MASTER

In the lower right-hand-corner, you find one that resembles the missing Lord Mayor. His face looks like it's frozen in horror.



DUNJUN

Guess we know why he went missing.

DALLEN

Kick these doors open.

DUNGEON MASTER

The doors BURST open wide... It's a small study.

DALLEN

Books?

DUNGEON MASTER

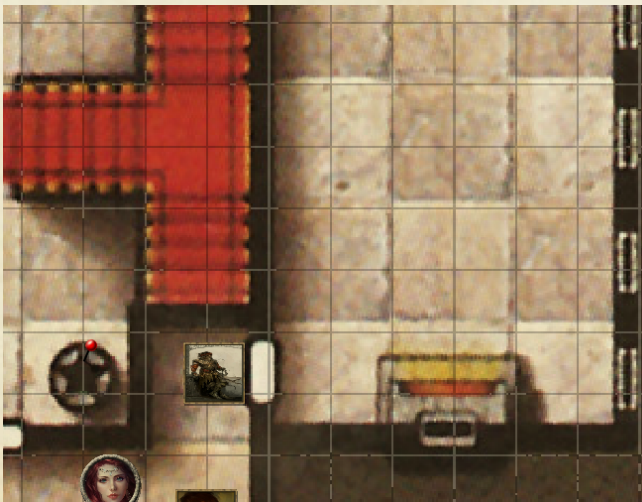
Yes. They all deal with the Outer Planes, plane travel, spellweaver lore, spelljammer ships, and interdimensional travel.

DALLEN

Mine now. (Moves over to other door) Open this door like a normal person.

DUNGEON MASTER

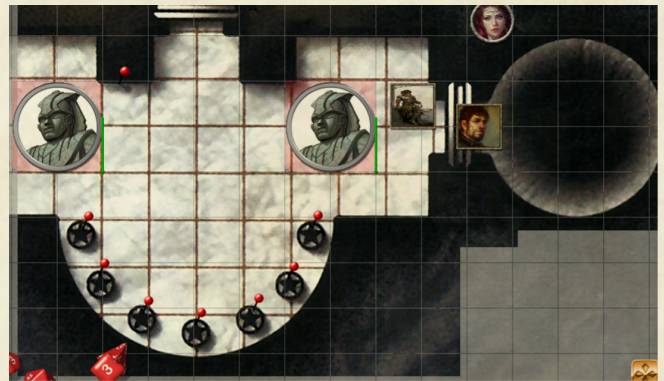
It opens into a dining hall.



The group eventually finds a secret door leading to a deep, dark pit...



They do, discovering an underground dungeon filled with blasphemous writing and demonic symbols... as well as two stone golems!



DUNGEON MASTER

Roll for initiative!

DALLEN

Attack the one closest to me with my *staff of the magi*. Plane shift him to that Abyssal plane.

DUNGEON MASTER

Occipitus?

DALLEN

Yes.

DUNGEON MASTER

Nice.

Dallen sends the first one to the Abyss. They fight the second, until...



DALLEN

Cast *reduce*. Con save.

The stone golem fails, and on Dallen's next turn...

DALLEN

Cast *passwall* below its now-shrunk form, creating an 8 foot by 5 foot shaft 20 feet deep.

DUNGEON MASTER

Nice! Roll 2d6 dmg for its fall

Dallen rolls: 2d6 = 7

DUNGEON MASTER

It tumbles to the bottom of the pit. It stands back up, pawing feebly at the wall, trying to climb.

DALLEN

Dallen slowly raises his staff in the air and as though he is underwater forces it down to the ground with a dull THUD.

They enter the room to the north...



...and find Lord Orbius Vhalantru!

DUNGEON MASTER

You see a DEMODAND spirit trapped in its center eye. His appearance is much more fiendish than the last time you saw him. There are three kidnapped townsfolk ready for sacrifice on the floor beneath him. You also notice one of its eye stalks is missing—the gift he gave to The Veiled Lady (Thifrane) for her to graft on her forehead.

DALLEN

Freaks.

LORD ORBIUS VHALANTRU

Please, won't you come all the way in? I've been expecting you.

DALLEN

They have all kinds of terrible powers. Like nulling magic.

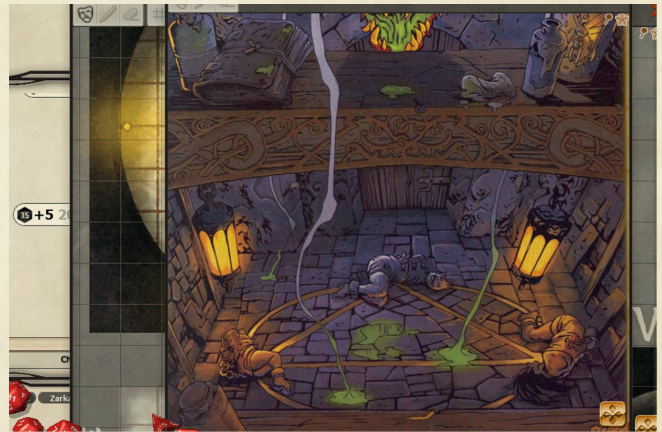
DUNGEON MASTER

Roll for initiative!

They roll for initiative, and the battle begins!

DALLEN

What's all in this room?



DALLEN

A windling skeleton. He's been to Earthdawn. Do we know any of the townsfolk?

DUNGEON MASTER

No.

Dallen mulls over his options. He's unable to cast spells because he's in Orbius's anti-magic cone from his center eye.

DALLEN

Cape of the Montebanke.

Dallen vanishes in a puff of smoke, appearing behind Orbius.



At the start of its turn, Orbius closes its central eye so it can unleash three eye rays at Dunjun and Jyu. Jyu goes down with a sleep ray, and Dunjun takes a death ray!

DUNGEON MASTER

Dunjun suffers 46 dmg from a *death ray*!

In response, Dunjun uses his bands of Bolero, *binding Orbius—suspended in mid air; the metal bands extending out around him to the beams, securing him in place. (Restrained.)*

DUNGEON MASTER

Now it uses its Legendary Action at Dunjun! Random eye ray...

Dungeon Master rolls: 1d10 = 4

DUNGEON MASTER

Dex save!

Dunjun rolls: 1d20+4 = 10

DUNGEON MASTER

FAIL. You are SLOWED.

LORD ORBIUS VHALANTRU

Muahahahaha! You cannot stop us! (in the voice of Kraang) You think these shackles will stop—

DUNJUN

Yes. Yes, I do.

DALLEN

I want to cast *telekinesis* to shove one of the townsfolk out the door.

DUNGEON MASTER

Okay, one of them goes sliding out—and Orbius uses a Legendary Action...

Dungeon Master rolls: 1d10 = 9

DUNGEON MASTER

He uses disintegration at the sliding townsfolk, turning him into a swirling vortex of dust!!!

DALLEN

Bastard!

The battle rages on. Eventually Jyu reawakens. Orbius is down to only a few hit points—and so is Dunjun. A TPK is always just a moment away during this epic battle...



DUNGEON MASTER

3 random eye rays, one for each of you...

Dallen gets PARALYZED, Scarlet gets PARALYZED but makes her save, and Dunjun gets DEATH RAY again! But thanks to being INDOMITABLE, he makes his save and blasts back with Abanazzar's scorching wave, using a Fate Point to give it max damage! Even though Orbius makes his save, it's still enough damage to destroy him!

LORD ORBIUS VHALANTRU

GaAaaAAArrraahhhh!

Craig, the Orbius Killer!

The first time I ran SCAP, Craig's character was the only one left standing. He was a fighter, and couldn't reach Orbius—so he drank a *potion of levitation*, floated up to him, and rolled a Crit, destroying him! And here, too, he delivered the final blow. He officially earned his beholder-slaying merit badge!

DUNGEON MASTER

SUDDENLY THE GROUND BEGINS TO RUMBLE. IT'S A HUGE EARTHQUAKE THAT GETS STRONGER WITH EACH PASSING MOMENT.

DUNJUN

Ummm....

DUNGEON MASTER

The place starts to shake apart! The beams fall. CRACKS in the foundations.

DUNJUN

I think this is a good time, structurally speaking, for us to leave!

DUNGEON MASTER

Nice reference.

They flee the crumbling dungeon, with Scarlet carrying one of the remaining townsfolk, and Dunjun the other—plus a still-paralyzed Dallen!

When they get topside...

DUNGEON MASTER

When you get topside, you are horrified to see... that Cauldron is erupting. TO BE CONTINUED!

DALLEN

So, I need to evacuate everyone. Stupid volcano. Who does that?

DUNGEON MASTER

Nice call back.



Until next time!

CHAPTER NINE: FOUNDATIONS OF FLAME



Chat log started
'Dallen' connected
'Dunjun' connected
'Adran' connected
'ShrebGnar' connectetd
'Scarlet' connected

The heroes left off in bedlam and fire as Cauldron began to erupt!

DUNJUN

Feets, don't fail me now!



DUNGEON MASTER

Okay, which way do you go?

DUNJUN

Exit! Stage left!

They begin to flee, along with everyone else, but soon run into a monster...



DALLEN

There really is a Crater Lake Monster.

DUNGEON MASTER

Yes, turns out it's not a myth after all. The earthquake agitated it from slumber.

DUNJUN

We need to get these people out of here.



They fight to protect civilians and eventually defeat the foul creature. But they run into many more obstacles trying to keep the citizens of Cauldron safe!

DUNGEON MASTER

"A tall tenement structure stands here, the windows on the top floor thrown open. A hysterical man leans precariously out one of the windows, a wailing child clutched in his arms. On the street below, another man stands screaming up at the man in the window, gesticulating wildly and pointing at the ground floor."

After saving the man, they quickly run into another problem!

DUNGEON MASTER

"The ground heaves suddenly, lurching violently upward. An instant later, a massive explosion rips through the street. A ball of fire the size of a large house tears through the cobbles, followed by a thunderous blast of stone debris."

DUNGEON MASTER

"A low rumble that permeates the air sounds and even feels different than the periodic tremors that have been shaking Cauldron. The sound continues to build, quickly adding numerous screams to its chorus. An instant later, the source of the strange sound is apparent. From one of the steep streets that leads to the edge of the city, rubble from collapsed buildings and other debris is sliding and tumbling downward, forming an avalanche of detritus and ruin that threatens to engulf everything in its path."

While helping dig trapped people out, they hear a tremendous ROAR overhead...

DUNGEON MASTER

HOOKFACE THE RED DRAGON LANDS ABOVE YOU!

DUNJUN

Assholes and elbows...

SHREBGNAR

Goodie. I'm going to use a *heal* potion.

HOOKFACE

WHO DARES AWAKEN ME FROM MY SLUMBER?



With amazing effort and some brilliant strategy, the heroes manage to defeat Hookface! The final blow came from Adran's vorpal weapon—a natural 20! I know they don't work on Legendary creatures, but that was too cool to pass up. Besides, Hookface was down to 13 hit points, so with a might blow of his vorpal pole-ax, Adran (played by Kael) beheaded the mighty terror! And this is where we left off... until next time!



The adventure concludes in [SHACKLED CITY VOLUME THREE!](#)

MORE NERD STUFF

Looking for more homebrew nerd stuff? Check out my turn-based multiplayer tabletop strategy wargame, [A GAME OF THRONE STRATEGY!](#)